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Editorial

Response to the worsening crisis: Revolution and people's uprising

The plunderous acts of imperialism and its conniving puppet reactionary class are at their utmost. They have brought about the massive destruction of productive forces in the semicolonies and extreme suffering to the peoples of the world. Along with the escalating crisis of overproduction in imperialist countries, the oppressed and backward countries suffer supply shortages, skyrocketing prices of rice, corn, wheat and other other basic needs of the majority of the population.

The new recession triggered by the crisis of the world capitalist system has yet to strike, yet the vast majority of the world's peoples already suffer severe hunger, the Filipino people included.

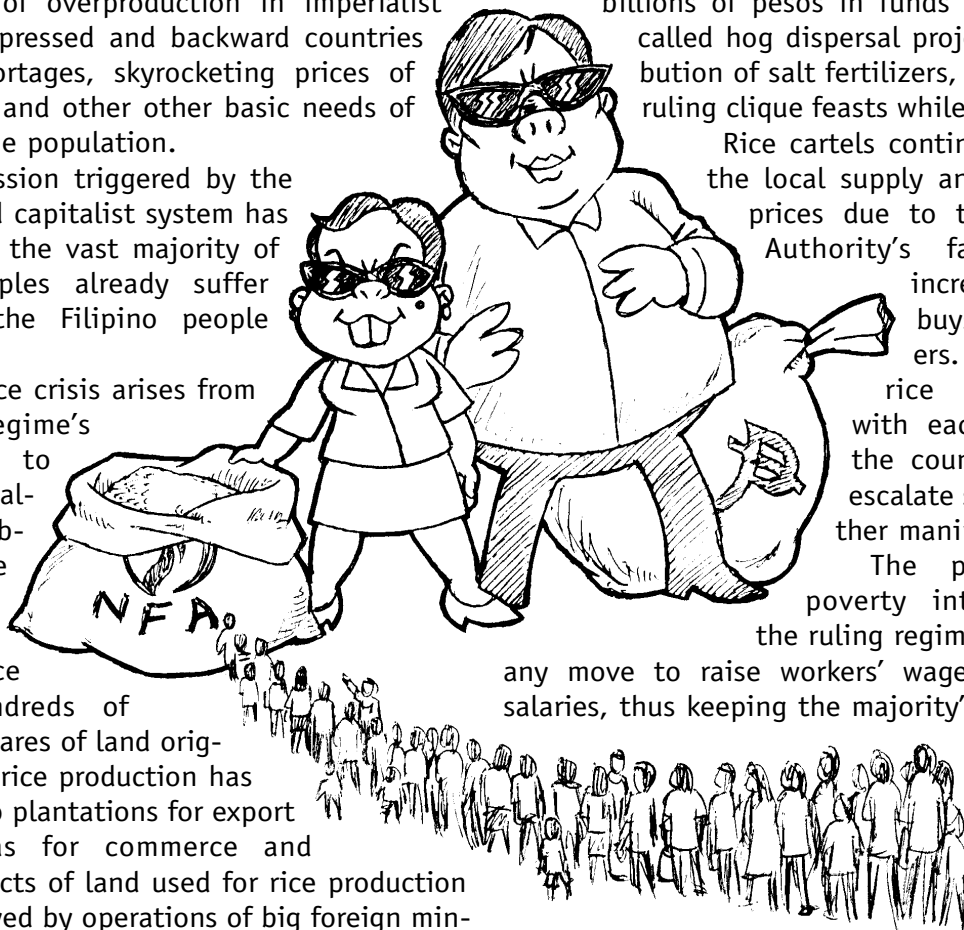
The current rice crisis arises from the puppet regime's blind adherence to imperialist "globalization," the absence of genuine agrarian reform and massive corruption. Since the 1990s, hundreds of thousands of hectares of land originally devoted to rice production has been converted to plantations for export crops, and areas for commerce and tourism. Huge tracts of land used for rice production have been destroyed by operations of big foreign min-

ing companies. Billions of funds allocated for rice stocks, fertilizers, irrigation projects and other agricultural subsidies have only ended up in the pockets of Gloria Arroyo and her minions. Quite unsatisfied, Arroyo and her operators are siphoning off additional billions of pesos in funds meant for the so-called hog dispersal project and the distribution of salt fertilizers, among others. The ruling clique feasts while the people starve.

Rice cartels continue to lord it over the local supply and manipulate rice prices due to the National Food Authority's failure (NFA) to increase the volume it buys from local farmers. The NFA and the rice cartels conspire with each other to flood the country with imports, escalate smuggling and further manipulate rice prices.

The people's grinding poverty intensifies because the ruling regime purposely blocks any move to raise workers' wages and employees' salaries, thus keeping the majority's incomes low and inadequate.

The people's stomachs growl with hunger and their breasts burst with rage



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highlights...***

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as they rile against the regime's avarice and wanton disregard for their suffering and oppression.

The US-Arroyo regime, however, fears that the intensifying rice crisis will explode and escalate into a massive uprising. It is aware that the supply shortages and soaring prices of rice are set to worsen during the rainy season and the onset of typhoons in the coming months. Through the NFA, the regime sells rice at a relatively cheaper price, but only to gain favorable publicity, and to avert the potentially explosive fury of a poor and hungry people.

The crisis has reached such a point where the regime has become too desperate, rendering the reactionary system inutile to arrest the worsening rice crisis and avert the irrepressible anger and uprising of

the people. Although the regime feigns innocence, the people point to it as the cause of their miseries and oppression. They have long realized that they can rely on it for nothing.

The severe crisis has further pushed the people to tread the path of resistance. Millions of poor and hungry people are becoming aroused into actively participating in the armed revolutionary movement. They are driven by their intense desire to put an end to the entire rotten, moribund, puppet and reactionary system. As the crisis festers and intensifies, conditions become ripe for a massive people's uprising that will overthrow the exploiting, plundering, callous and cruel US-Arroyo regime. AB

Protests against spiraling rice prices

Various militant organizations have staged protest actions to oppose the continuing increases in the prices of rice and other commodities.

More than 50 members of the women's group Gabriela staged a picket at the façade of the National Price Coordinating Council (NPCC) in Makati City on April 17. Gabriela pushed for price controls on the spiraling prices of rice and other commodities because of the unbearable suffering this has caused to the people.

Members of the Kilusang Mag-

bubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) rallied in front of a National Food Authority warehouse in Quezon City to oppose the administration's order to pull out cheap NFA rice from public markets. The KMP stressed that the plan constitutes outright abandonment by the regime of its responsibility to the people. It assailed the Arroyo regime for passing on the burden of the rice crisis to consumers.

KMP also lambasted the rice cartels such as the Binondo 7 for hoarding massive rice supplies. It identified the Binondo 7 members as Joaquin Go Soliman, Pio Sy Lato, Ramon Ang Syson, Gil Go, Teofredo Co, Leoncio Tan and his wife Janet Tio.

Members of the League of Filipino Students and Anakbayan picketed the NFA office on April 18, condemning the Arroyo regime for the worsening food crisis. Anakbayan stressed that the Arroyo regime's refusal to control spiraling rice prices, effect legislated wage hikes and scrap the Expanded Value Added Tax on oil and food only reflect its lack of genuine concern for the people's welfare.

On the other hand, the Council for Health and Development warned that unabated increases in the price of rice and other commodities will gravely affect the health of poor Filipinos. The health group added that millions of families today are so poor they could no longer afford such basic daily needs as rice, and their bodies weaken from hunger. Soaring rice prices further reduce the amount of money people can spend on health care. AB



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Growing support for people's war in Mindanao

Need for wage hike, more urgent than ever

With the prices of rice and other staples continually on the rise, it has become even more urgent to hike wages and salaries of workers and government employees. Workers' wages and salaries of private sector employees have been pegged at extremely low levels for the past 10 years. Government employees, on the other hand, have not received any salary increase since 2001, except for the meager 10% increase in basic pay this year.

Workers both from the private and public sectors are demanding a P125 hike in the minimum wage and P3,000 on salaries, saying that the increases should be legislated across the board nationwide and not left to the decision of the pro-capitalist regional wages boards.

A study by the National Wage and Productivity Commission (NWPC) in March shows that a family of six in the National Capital Region (NCR) needs P858 daily to live decently. The current minimum wage in the NCR is pegged at a low P350 per day, even less than half of what is needed for subsistence. Ironically, this is the highest rate in the archipelago.

At P200, the minimum wage is lowest in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, a rate far below the daily decent living standard of P698, based on the same NWPC study. If the current inflation rate is factored in, the P350 workers' minimum wage in Metro Manila would only have a real value of P245.61. The P200 wage would be equivalent to only P136. The NWPC study further reveals that 85% of the total workforce does not even receive the minimum wage.

The Kilusang Mayo Uno and the Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (UMA) lambasted Arroyo's instructions to the regional tripartite wage boards to convene and decide the minimum wage hikes for workers in their respective regions. Even more insulting was her congressional allies' proposal of a P36 or 10% increase on the current minimum wage. Similarly unacceptable was the yellow unions' proposal of an P80 hike in the daily wage. In reality, the P125 and P3,000 across the board nationwide pay increase of workers in the private and government sectors are already low. Nevertheless, even this slight increase can bring immediate relief to millions of impoverished families.

Along with the proposal for wage hikes, the workers' group has pushed for the removal of the 12% value added tax imposed by the Arroyo regime on petroleum products, adding that the move will result in the following: P59 less for an 11-kilogram tank of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) consumed by six million families; additional income of about P123 per day for 427,000 jeepney drivers; and an extra P19 daily increase in the incomes of 582,000 tricycle drivers.

AB

Close to 350 military actions were contributed by the valiant Red fighters of Mindanao to the advancement of armed struggle across the archipelago last year.

The capacity of units of the New People's Army (NPA) to seize the initiative in battle stems from their relentless efforts at improving battle tactics and techniques, which is regularly accomplished by territorial and unit commands. The military command also provides special training in sniping, use of explosives and intelligence work.

NPA units were able to seize the initiative even in defensive situations resulting from miscalculations as well as laxity in military discipline. In most cases, the Red fighters were able to inflict a significant number of casualties on the enemy.

In spite of desperate attacks by enemy troopers, membership in the NPA posted a 5% growth throughout the island, further swelling the ranks of thousands of full-time Red fighters. In one region alone, over 300 new full-time fighters were recruited in just a year. This signifies the increasing enthusiasm and willingness of the peasant masses to allow their valiant sons and daughters to join the people's army. There are likewise continuing efforts to resolve emerging problems pertaining to comrades whose enthusiasm for the struggle has waned due to various reasons such as illness, battle wounds and family concerns, among others.

The people's militia are in the thousands and continue to expand. These units serve as reserves and support forces of the regular NPA units in maintaining peace and order in the barrios. The people's

militia also participate in tactical offensives, neutralizing the enemy's intelligence network in the barriow, and implementing other tasks of the revolutionary movement. The North Eastern Mindanao region has a wealth of experience in this particular line of work.

The NPA advances the agrarian revolution amid intensifying armed struggle. Thousands of farmers have benefited from successful antifeudal campaigns to reduce land rent, rice milling fees and rental fees for other production implements; reducing usury rates and costs of goods; and raising the wages of farm workers and the farmgate prices of agricultural products. The NPA likewise organized several types of cooperatives and similar projects to increase production.

In line with the implementation of a genuine land reform program, the NPA is launching a movement to counter the plunder of mining corporations, logging companies and capitalist farms owned and controlled by imperialists and the big comprador bourgeoisie. Through intensive mass education, the NPA helps in raising the political consciousness of members of the revolutionary movement. Members are given basic courses as well as special courses on burning social issues. This is aside from conducting mass campaigns for literacy, health and culture. Thousands of farmers have benefited from these social services—an endeavor mimicked but poorly imitated by the enemy's reactionary and puppet RSOT.

These successes have resulted in the expansion and consolidation of the mass base, now counting millions in the whole of Mindanao, excluding town centers and cities. NDF-Mindanao spokesperson Jorge "Ka Oris" Madlos has announced the continued expansion of mass organizations such the Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid, Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan, Kabataang Makabayan and Rebolusyonaryong Organisyon ng mga Lumad. Inter-barrio and municipal-level organs of political power are maintained in a number of guerrilla fronts.

On the whole, no military campaign employed by the reactionary government can ever destroy the ever-advancing armed struggle in the countryside. Mindanao's experience is a clear indication that people's war continues to gain wide support from the most oppressed and exploited sectors of the Philippine society. The people's protracted war can never be defeated by any desperate military campaign of the reactionary regime, concluded Ka Oris. AB



Offensives in Isabela, Davao, Compostela Valley, Quezon and Abra

The New People's Army (NPA) launched successive tactical offensives and military actions against the puppet-fascist soldiers of the Arroyo regime these past weeks. Following are among the initial field reports received by *Ang Bayan*:

April 20. A government trooper was killed in a one-hour firefight between the NPA and the Philippine Army in Ilagan, Isabela at around 6 a.m.

April 15. A government soldier of the 16th IB was killed and another one wounded in an attack by NPA guerrillas in Sitio Macalla, Pagsangahan, Nakar, Quezon at around 1:30 p.m.

April 12. NPA fighters assaulted Barangay Malativas in Panabo City and arrested elements of the Civilian Volunteers Organization (CVO) conducting patrols in the area. Four Garand rifles were seized from the barangay policemen, who were too surprised to retaliate.

Meanwhile, in Monkayo, Compostela Valley, a Philippine Army trooper was killed instantly in a sniping operation by Red fighters against a Philippine Army detachment in Barangay Banlag.

April 10-11. Two soldiers were killed and five others were wounded in two separate harassment operations by the NPA against elements of the 743rd Combat Support Wing of the Philippine Air Force in Mamala Uno, Sariaya, Quezon.

The first wave of harassment occurred at around 6 a.m. where two enemy soldiers were killed instantly. At around 8 a.m., the Red fighters attacked again, wounding three soldiers.

The following day, the third wave of harassment was launched, critically wounding two fascist soldiers. Field reports stated that the wounded enemy soldiers were immediately brought to a hospital in Quezon City.

The villagers rejoiced at the successive punitive actions meted by the NPA against the abusive military soldiers who are notorious for stealing chickens, rice, bolos, store items and other property of the barriofolk every time they conduct military operations in the countryside.

April 5. Four soldiers belonging to the 52nd Division Reconnaissance Company (DRC) of the 5th Infantry Division died in a clash in Tubo, Abra, according to Ka Diego Wadagan, spokesperson of the Agustin Begnalen Command of the NPA-Abra. The soldiers were deployed as security forces of big mining companies in the Cordillera. AB

AFP terrorism in Abra

The people of Tubo, Abra are now suffering from intense brutality and terrorism perpetrated by elements of the Armed Forces of the Philippines belonging to the 50th IB and 52nd Division Reconnaissance Company (DRC) in the course of their military operations. Martial law prevails in the barrios of Pananuman and Tuftuba. Military operations also cover Barangays Beew, Alangtin and Dulong, all in Tubo, and the neighboring barrio of Lamag in Quirino, Ilocos Sur.

Since March 12, military troopers have been forcibly occupying the elementary school, barangay hall, church and "dapay" or traditional meeting place in Pananuman.

They positioned their 60 mm and 81 mm mortars and 105 mm howitzer in the middle of a cluster of houses and converted the village schoolyard into a helicopter pad. Since March 25, close to 100 howitzer bullets have been fired, day and night.

The military are accusing the village people of being NPA supporters. Soldiers illegally enter homes, ransack the people's belongings and confiscate property, reasoning out that these owned by the NPA. Among the items confiscated were hunting rifles, VHF radios used for inter-barangay communication, cell-phones and even clothes.

The villagers have suffered restrictions in their movements, thus adversely affecting their agricultural production. They are forbidden by the military to tend to their lands, visit their swidden farms, pasturelands or go to the forest. A few days after Mariano Galisen went to his swidden farm in Tuftuba on April 1, villagers found his decomposing body in a forested area. The people of Tuftuba believe that he was murdered by the military operating in the area when they took over his farm.

The enemy soldiers also force

the barriofolk to become guides and porters. Headed by 1Lt. John Pedregosa and 2Lt. Rashid Abdul Avila, the military troopers coerced some 27 civilians from Pananuman and Tuftuba to retrieve the body of a soldier who died in an encounter in Ampungan, which is several hours trek from their homes.

The soldiers continue to bomb, strafe and pound forested areas along the Tubao and Besao boundary with artillery fire. Two OV-10 bombers, including two F5 fighter jets dropped a total of 117 125- and 250-pound bombs daily from March 23 to March 28. AB

Bayan Muna coordinator abducted

Eight men suspected to be military elements abducted Noel Samar, 33, on April 15. Samar was a former Bayan Muna coordinator for Albay in 2001. He was kidnapped while tending his retail store in Barangay Layon, Ligao City. Eyewitnesses revealed that he was hit in the head with a .45 cal pistol. When he lost consciousness, he was handcuffed and carried to a white Mitsubishi van that fled while being followed by two motorcycles. He was surfaced and dropped off blindfolded the following day along a highway in Barangay Banao, Guinobatan, Albay. AB

NPA-Panay avers AFP was target of ambush

The Napoleon Tumagtang Command of the NPA-Southern Front in Panay has clarified that Rep. Exequiel Javier of Antique and Mayor Elizabeth Coloso of San Remigio, Antique were not the targets of the NPA on April 4 when Red fighters ambushed elements of the 31st Division Reconnaissance Company of the 3rd ID in Barangay Aningcalan, San Remigio. The comrades seized two M16 armalite rifles, a handset and rounds of ammunition from the ambush. A 15-minute gunfight ensued, resulting in the death of two government troopers and injuries to two others.

The guerrilla fighters had been on ambush position for five days, waiting for the abusive military unit. They let Mayor Coloso's group pass unharmed (Javier was not in the area), the former being the guest of honor in the inauguration of two public schools in Barangays Bulan-Bulan and Alegria. The NPA unit executed the ambush specifically targeting the elements of 31st DRC as the latter were headed back to their detachment. AB



Bayan Muna leaders released

Bayan Muna leader Jose Cawiding was released April 26 along with co-accused Leticia Banasan after six months of detention at the Benguet Provincial Jail.

Bontoc Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 35 Presiding Judge Joseph Patnaan issued an order on March 16 releasing Cawiding and Banasan pursuant to the provisional dismissal of the cases filed against them. A provisional dismissal means their case may be revived once a witness testifies to support the allegations against them. If no witness comes forward in two years, charges against them will be permanently dropped.

Cawiding and Banasan were arrested and charged with eight counts of murder and one count of frustrated murder. The charges stemmed from an ambush conducted by the New People's Army in July 2003 in Sitio Saddle, Talubin, Bontoc, Mountain Province that killed eight military troopers and wounded a soldier.

Cawiding and Banasan's detention and their malicious implication in the murder cases is a clear example of the Arroyo regime's repressive and coercive tactics against leaders and members of progressive and legal organizations. AB

Repression of anti-mining activists scored

The Kalikasan-People's Network for the Environment (PNE) scored the Arroyo regime for its continued repression of anti-mining activists. Kalikasan said that 23 incidents of human rights violations against environmentalists have been recorded since Arroyo was installed in power in 2001, 18 of them against persons active in campaigns against mining operations. The victims include a teacher in Quezon who was killed in 2005 for opposing mining operations in their area.

This situation is alarming, stressed Kalikasan-PNE, an environmental network that staunchly opposes foreign mining corporations such as the Linktone Mining Corporation in Zamboanga City owned by China, Lafayette Mining in Marinduque, Royal Company in Australia and Oceanic Philippines in Nueva Vizcaya, among others.

In spite of these repressive measures, PNE reiterated its call to oppose and scrap the Mining Act of 1995, related laws and all other environmentally destructive measures. AB

Victims assail Palace report to UNHRC

Victims and survivors of human rights violations under the Arroyo regime staged a protest action in Quezon City on April 19 where they condemned the lies disseminated by the Philippine government delegation before the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva, Switzerland last week. The presentation by Arroyo's minions before the UNHRC Universal Periodic Review (UPR) regarding the human rights situation in the country consisted of nothing but blatant lies.

The protest was led by Hustisya, an organization of victims and families of victims of human rights violations. The group trooped to the Quezon Memorial Circle at 10 a.m. and brought with them an effigy of Gloria Arroyo who was portrayed as "a clown with bloodied hands."

The rallyists condemned the worsening human rights situation in the country, contrary to the one-sided UNHRC report presented by Arroyo's men claiming and boasting that political killings and forced disappearances in the country have dwindled.

Members of Hustisya, Karapatan and other human rights groups gather together every third Saturday of the month to demand a cessation to political killings, abductions and the continuing repression perpetrated by the Arroyo regime.

The Philippine UPR Watch coalition, a group established to monitor the Universal Periodic Review, demanded the disqualification of the Philippines or the suspension of its membership in the UNHRC. The group sent a six-member delegation to the UN consisting of one representative each from the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, Bayan Muna, Karapatan and the International Association of People's Lawyers, aside from Jonathan Sta. Rosa, brother of the slain Pastor Isaias Sta. Rosa of the Methodist Church and Dr. Edita Burgos, mother of disappeared activist Jonas Burgos.

Meanwhile, the National Union of People's Lawyers castigated

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita's report on alleged improvements in the human rights situation in the country and his claims that his UNHRC report generated applause from the audience. Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and Teodoro Casiño countered the administration's report, presented a more accurate human rights situation in the country, and added that Ermita's report actually elicited various questions and negative comments from almost 18 countries regarding the human rights situation in the Philippines. AB

AFP steps up harassment of militant solons

THE Arroyo regime has stepped its harassment of progressive lawmakers.

The Nueva Ecija Prosecutor's Office, acting on pressure from the Inter-Agency Legal Action Group (IALAG) of Malacañang, filed murder charges against Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and fellow Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño, Gabriela Women's Party Rep. Liza Maza and Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano.

"These murder cases are just trumped-up charges, just like the previous charges filed against the Batasan 5. This is part of the political persecution against us," Maza said in a press interview.

Along with this, Ocampo denounced the surveillance being conducted by the police and military in the vicinity of his house. Ocampo's staff spotted two men aboard a motorcycle staking out his residence in Quezon City. They also noticed these men's two other companions aboard vehicles talking to somebody over the radio.

Ocampo added that it was Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez who instigated the fabricated case against him.

Ocampo and other representatives were accused of masterminding the assassination of Carlito Bayudang, Danilo Felipe and Jimmy Peralta. Bayudang was a former leader of the Red Vigilante Group, a paramilitary group under the Philippine Army. He was convicted and sentenced to death by the people's court for several cases of human rights violations and meted punishment by the New People's Army in 2004. AB

NDF to celebrate 35th anniversary

THE National Democratic Front (NDF) will celebrate its 35th anniversary on April 24. The NDF is the united front revolutionary organization of the Filipino people struggling for national liberation.

Since 1973, the NDF has been promoting unity among progressive sectors of Philippine society to fight for national and societal freedom. Outside the country, it has continued to gain moral, political and material support for the revolutionary movement in the Philippines.

NDF allied organizations are set to gather together with the people in revolutionary bases and

guerrilla fronts in the countryside, and in cities and towns. On April 26, the International Information Office of the NDF (NDF-IIO) will spearhead the anniversary celebration in Amsterdam, The Netherlands with the theme "Celebrating 35 triumphant years of the Filipino people in their continuing struggle for national liberation."

The NDF-IIO will also launch fund-raising campaigns for flood and landslide victims in Samar and other parts of the country. The funds will also be used to help families of murdered and disappeared NDFP consultants in the peace negotiations.

Supreme Court rules in favor of LRT workers

THE Supreme Court ruled on April 14 that the dismissal of 211 Light Rail Transit (LRT) workers by the Metro Transit Organization Inc. (MTOI) was illegal. The workers staged a strike against the company in 2000 following a deadlock in negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement. The workers filed illegal dismissal and union busting charges against the MTOI after their termination.

Pursuant to this, union members of the Pinag-isang Lakas ng Manggagawa sa Metro Inc-National Federation of Labor will receive over P208 million in back pay. The High Tribunal also ordered MTOI to pay the workers' legal fees of over P21 million.

CPN-Maoist wins in Constituent Assembly elections in Nepal

Y Communist Party of Nepal (CPN)-Maoist was overwhelmingly successful in the recently concluded elections for a constituent assembly in the country. The CPN-M has already won 116 out of 215 seats already counted. A total of 240 seats were contested. The entire assembly will consist of more than 600 representatives, including those to be assigned by the government.

The formation of a constituent assembly was one of the proposals pushed by CPN-M before the Nepali government. Its purpose is to draft a democratic constitution and pave the way for the formal abolition of the monarchy.